

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8866

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, GR

SUBJECT: CARAMANLIS VISIT TO FRANCE, APRIL 16-18, 1975

1. QUAI SOUTHERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OFFICE (REUILLARD) AND GREEK EMBASSY HAVE BRIEFED US ON APRIL 16-L8 VISIT TO PARIS OF GREEK PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, ACCOMPANIED BY FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS. THEY REJECTED FRENCH PRESS COMMENTARY, ACCORDING TO WHICH VISIT WAS DISAPPOINTMENT TO CARAMANLIS, AS WELL AS EARLIER REPORTS THAT FRENCH HAVE RECENTLY COOLED OFF ON RELATIONS WITH GREECE WHICH HAD BEEN SO INTENSELY WARM LAST YEAR. QUAI AND GREEK EMBASSY FEEL THAT CARAMANLIS' GESTURE IN MAKING PARIS HIS FIRST FOREIGN VISIT AS PRIME MINISTER WAS GREATLY APPRECIATED BY GISCARD AND CONTRIBUTED TO CORDIALITY AND SUCCESS OF TRIP.

2. GOF PROMISED TO SUPPORT GREEK APPLICATION FOR EARLY ACCESSION TO FULL EC MEMBERSHIP. WHEREAS THIS HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN SET FOR 1984, BOTH PARTIES WILL STRIVE FOR ENTRY BEFORE 1980, ACCORDING TO GREEK EMBASSY, WHICH

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SAID PROCEDURE WOULD BE SAME AS FOR UK, IRELAND AND

DENMARK. GOF ALSO WILL ATTEMPT TO BUY MORE FROM GREECE SO AS TO ACHIEVE BALANCE IN TRADE, WHICH NOW IN FRANCE'S FAVOR. FRENCH BANKS WILL LOAN GREECE \$480 MILLION, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS; ALSO FRANCE WILL SUPPORT GREEK APPLICATION FOR \$400 MILLION IN EC CREDITS.

3. REGARDING CYPRUS, GISCARD TOLD CARAMANLIS IMPORTANCE GOF ATTACHES TO SUCCESS IN INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS, AND HOPES COMPROMISE COULD BE FOUND. GREEKS POINTED OUT THEY HAD LITTLE TO OFFER AND THEY HOPED FOR TURKISH GESTURE. ACCORDING TO REUILRD, QUAI CONCLUDED THAT BIREGIONAL SOLUTION CONTAINS GREAT DANGER OF HARDENING POSITIONS AND INCREASING CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES.

4. FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER RAISED WITH BITSIOS TURKISH OBJECTION TO GREEK "REMILITARIZATION" OF DODECANESE. ACCORDING TO REUILLARD'S VERSION, BITSIOS DID NOT DENY THAT MILITARY MEASURES RECENTLY TAKEN BY GREECE ARE ILLEGAL UNDER 1947 PARIS CONVENTION, BUT HE STRESSED THEIR PURELY DEFENSIVE NATURE. ON OTHER HAND, GREEK EMBASSY SOURCES REJECT ANY IMPLICATION OF ILLEGALITY, SINCE 1947 CONVENTION DOES NOT DENY GREECE RIGHT OF SELF-DEFENSE. THEY ALSO POINTED OUT TO US THAT FRENCH . HAD AGREED TO LAUNCH OIL PROSPECTING ONLY IN GREEK AREAS NOT DISPUTED BY TURKEY. REUILLARD SAID GREEKS HAD BEEN ENTIRELY RELAXED AND CONCILIATORY IN PASSING REFERENCES TO U.S. BASE NEGOTIATIONS. HE KNEW OF NO DISCUSSIONS ON NATO NOR OF ANY NEW ARMS SALES CONCLUDED DURING VISIT.

5. COMMENT: CARAMANLIS' VISIT WENT SMOOTHLY; HE AND GISCARD UNDOUBTEDLY FEEL THERE IS A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP". NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS ROUTINE AFFAIR WITH NO NEW GROUND BROKEN. IN FACT, THERE IS LITTLE FRANCE CAN DO FOR GREECE RIGHT NOW EXCEPT CONTINUE EXISTING POLICIES INCLUDING SUPPORT IN EC AND SOME ARMS DELIVERIES. WE CONCLUDE AFTER HIS RECERT CONTACTS WITH CARAMANLIS AND BOUMEDIENNE THAT GISCARD DOES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT HAVE ANY "GRAND DESIGN" FOR MEDITERRANEAN INITIATIVE; ALSO WE CANNOT DISCERN ANY COHESIVE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN STRATEGY. IN COMPARISON WITH PRIME IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO AREAS SUCH AS PERSIAN GULF, GISCARD SETS . LOWER PRIORITY ON IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES LIKE GREECE WHERE THERE ARE FEW ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES TO BE GAINED. WE DO NOT AGREE WITH PRESS SPECULATION OUT OF ATHENS ALLEGING THAT GOF IS ACTIVELY ATTEMPTING TO

SUPPLANT U.S. IN GREECE.

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